

## WHERE THE WISECRACKS GROW

a year ago over drinks i said to x.,  
with whom i moonlight grading essays,

"you know there are still people walking  
around out there whose writing skills  
have not been tested. why, there isn't  
even an essay portion of the driver's exam,  
let alone the test for a.i.d.s."

and tonight z. rushed in from the patio  
to announce, "you'll never guess the  
hilarious idea that x. just came up with:  
there should be an essay portion of  
the a.i.d.s. test!"

i didn't say a thing, just  
made sure that x.'s eyes met mine.

## I DO NOT HAZARD EXEGESIS

i tell her, "i heard a funny  
tommy smothers' line. it's a strange  
one, but funny. it's quite original,  
the sort you have to think about."

"go ahead," she says.

"someone — probably a talk show host —  
says that, for all its faults, nobody  
seems to have come up with a viable  
alternative to marriage. and tommy  
smothers says, " i have. so they ask  
him for this great alternative, and he  
says, 'you take a woman that you really  
hate and you buy her a house.'"

"that's it?"

"that's it."

"i'm afraid i don't get it."

"oh," i say, "well, as i said, it's  
one of those you have to think about."

— Gerald Locklin

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